



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Seaport Table 1, the Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased in May to 4.4 percent from April's rate of 4.5 percent. In May 2000, the rate was 3.9 percent. An increase in total employment for May reversed a 12-month trend of decreases. Still, even with the increase, employment was weak for a traditionally strong employment month. In the Employment by Industry section below we will discuss the employment situation more fully. The good news is that since last year at this time, May 2000, the *Civilian Labor Force* has increased by 1.5 percent. The bad news; May is the only month in 2001 to show any indication of an increase in employment. Employment since January has declined in almost all industries by small amounts. Business leaders feel that the bad news, such as layoffs in major manufacturing sectors and the poor economic condition of surrounding communities, has created a business attitude that has become more conservative, slowing employment growth. Expansion plans are being put on hold until they can determine the resiliency of the economy to cope with the layoffs.

In May, Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased 140 jobs from April 2000, but decreased 840 from May 2000. Most of the increase since April was in *Government Administration*, mainly because of hiring for roadwork crews and parks/recreation maintenance. Employment in both *Manufacturing* and *Construction* increased, a good indicator that employment will grow in the future. Only two decreases were noted in May and both were expected. *Government Education* decreased which is normal for this time of year, because of schools summer vacation. And *Finance* employment decreased because of mergers and consolidations. The real news from last year is that employment decreases occurred in almost all industries. The decreases

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	May 2001*	Apr 2001	May 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,980	34,790	34,450	0.5	1.5
Unemployment	1,530	1,550	1,340	-1.3	14.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4%	4.5%	3.9%		
Total Employment	33,450	33,240	33,110	0.6	1.0
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	35,020	34,840	34,550	0.5	1.4
Unemployment	1,400	1,570	1,210	-10.8	15.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.0%	4.5%	3.5%		
Total Employment	33,620	33,270	33,340	1.1	0.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	25,930	25,790	26,770	0.5	-3.1
Goods-Producing Industries	5,180	5,100	5,510	1.6	-6.0
Mining & Construction	1,360	1,330	1,430	2.3	-4.9
Manufacturing	3,820	3,770	4,080	1.3	-6.4
Food Processing	70	70	130	0.0	-46.2
Lumber & Wood Products	710	690	730	2.9	-2.7
Paper Products	1,700	1,700	1,830	0.0	-7.1
All Other Manufacturing	1,340	1,310	1,390	2.3	-3.6
Service-Producing Industries	20,750	20,690	21,260	0.3	-2.4
Transportation	1,340	1,350	1,320	-0.7	1.5
Communications & Utilities	280	280	290	0.0	-3.4
Wholesale Trade	950	940	970	1.1	-2.1
Retail Trade	5,300	5,290	5,310	0.2	-0.2
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,330	1,380	1,450	-3.6	-8.3
Services	7,000	6,960	7,540	0.6	-7.2
Government Administration	2,020	1,910	1,920	5.8	5.2
Government Education	2,530	2,580	2,460	-1.9	2.8
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

across the board could mean, as mentioned above, that businesses are speculating on the regions economic attitude and how capably the economy can absorb layoffs. Because of its diversity, I believe the economy will survive and continue to grow, although at a reduced rate.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- The city of Orofino has been awarded almost \$2 million in state and federal grants to build a new 6.5-acre industrial park. The planned 26,000-square-foot building will house up to four businesses that could provide employment for as many as 150 people. The industrial park will be located along U.S. Highway 12 between the Orofino Cemetery and the Department of Transportation building. Anchoring the new site will be Architectural Signs and Engraving Inc. (ASE), which employs almost 50 people. ASE has been in Orofino since 1994 and has committed to bring on five additional employees each year for the next five years. It will almost double the size of its plant by

moving into the new complex. The city is in negotiations with several out-of-state companies to fill vacant space at the industrial park. And while names of the companies are not being released, the city is confident that they will have little problem filling vacancies. Companies at the site are expected to supply jobs that pay between \$8 to \$12 an hour.

- A new Subway has opened at 11330 Highway 12 in Orofino. The new franchise is locally owned and operated.

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- The bowling alley in Craigmont that burned to the ground in 1990 is being rebuilt thanks to a community-wide effort. The community, under the organization of Prairie Bowl Inc., sold more than 230 shares at \$500 each to local people. It's been more than a year since the community bought lanes from Lewiston's Imperial Bowl. With fund-raising efforts and a loan of \$102,000 from Clearwater Economic Development Association, the dream of a new bowling alley is becoming a reality.

Latah County

- Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories Inc. (SEL) has announced an expansion of its Pullman Plant by 60 percent in the next year. SEL will hire an additional 50 employees in 2001. "We're pretty cautious in hiring this year," company president and founder Ed Schweitzer said, noting many national companies who over-hired for the economic environment. The expansion plan is not as conservative. It will create a total of 200,000 square feet of building space at the Port of Whitman County Industrial park on the north edge of Pullman. The 40,000-square-foot addition will be added to the current manufacturing building, which covers 65,000 square feet. In just a year, the company has outgrown the plant, Schweitzer said. The company is Pullman's biggest success story and second largest employer, after Washington State University. It manufactures industrial electrical relays and operates 39 customer service offices from Charlotte, N.C. to Bolivia.
- Pacific Simulation of Moscow expects to more than triple its workforce to about 160 following the announcement that the company was purchased by international conglomerate Invensys. Invensys is a holding company of one of the largest corporations that develop systems for industrial automations and control. Jim Haynes, a Pacific Simulation founder, said the 12-year-old software company sought the buyout to support the rapid rollout of a software system for newsprint mills. Invensys believes the system can become the world standard. Pacific Simulation will retain its name and expand at its Moscow location.
- Starbucks and Denny's will open new restaurants in Moscow. Starbucks, the Seattle-based retail coffee

giant, is slated to open in July at the Palouse Empire Mall. The business will occupy the space formerly housing Flowers Etc., which has moved to a remodeled space at the mall. An opening date for Denny's has not been set yet, but the location of the restaurant will be 121 War Bonnet. You may not recognize the Moscow Denny's because it will differ from the traditional look and have more of a diner appearance with a stainless steel exterior and a "50's" theme inside.

- Gritman Medical Center in Moscow has announced plans to add a \$20 million south wing. The hospital's planned expansion would require closing of a one-block portion of Eighth Street, immediately south of the hospital. The new wing would be constructed on the street and on land owned by Gritman. The expansion would increase hospital bed space by 25 percent; the number of operating rooms would double to four; beds in the same-day surgery center would increase from six to fourteen; and emergency room space would double. Plans also call for moving the hospital's helipad to the roof and increasing parking.

Nez Perce County & Asotin Counties

- The Port of Wilma is moving forward with expansion plans in an attempt to draw more industrial businesses to fuel economic growth in the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley. "We're trying to enhance the port and provide the infrastructure—good old fashioned, basic, heavy industry infrastructure," said Joe Poire, executive director for the Port of Whitman, which administers the Port of Wilma. Occupancy at the 250-acre port, located across Red Wolf Crossing Bridge from Clarkston, has hovered between 98 and 100 percent the past few years and additional companies are asking for space, Poire said. The port is working on a 30-acre expansion plan on property purchased from the Army Corps of Engineers. "I don't see us having a call center or a computer wafer chip manufacturing plant," Poire said, "I see steady growth in heavy industry".
- The Nez Perce Tribe is betting the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemoration will bring more tourists to its casinos. A feasibility study and plans are being evaluated to give the Clearwater Casino located near Lewiston a facelift, and a permanent building. Plans also call for a hotel, entertainment and convention center, food and beverage outlets and a golf course.

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